

Statement on Signing Legislation for the Relief of the Parents of Theresa Marie Schiavo

March 21, 2005

Today I signed into law a bill that will allow Federal courts to hear a claim by or on behalf of Terri Schiavo for violation of her rights relating to the withholding or withdrawal of food, fluids, or medical treatment necessary to sustain her life. In cases like this one, where there are serious questions and substantial doubts, our society, our laws, and our courts should have a presumption in favor of life. This pre-

sumption is especially critical for those like Terri Schiavo who live at the mercy of others. I appreciate the bipartisan action by the Members of Congress to pass this bill. I will continue to stand on the side of those defending life for all Americans, including those with disabilities.

NOTE: S. 686, approved March 21, was assigned Public Law No. 109-3.

Remarks to Senior Citizens in Albuquerque, New Mexico

March 22, 2005

The President. Listen, thank you all for letting the Senator and I come by. We're thrilled to be—I'm thrilled to be back in New Mexico. You know, it's right across the border from right where I was raised. But I'm here today to talk about Social Security. I know it's of concern to you; it's of concern to me as well.

My message to people that are getting their Social Security check is pretty simple, and it's this: The Government is going to keep its promise. You just don't have to worry about it. I know there are some conflicting messages out there, but it's just not the truth. The truth is you're going to get your checks. The question is whether or not your grandchildren are going to get their checks. [*Laughter*] And that's what the Senator and I are here to talk about today, because we want to make sure that not only is the safety net solid for you but that there's is a safety net for your children.

People oftentimes ask me, did Franklin Roosevelt do the right thing with Social Security? And my answer is, absolutely. My

predecessor, Franklin Roosevelt, did the right thing in setting up the Social Security system. And now we've got to make sure the Social Security system works for generations. And that's why we're in town—that's why I'm in town; Pete is in town because he lives here. [*Laughter*]

But thanks for letting us come by. It's great to see you.

Audience member. It's great to see you.

The President. How was the egg?

Audience member. Marvelous.

Audience member. We have the best cook.

The President. Good.

Senator Pete V. Domenici. We don't get to eat, Mr. President.

The President. No, that's right; we've got to go work. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. Can I shake your hand?

The President. Yes sir, you can. Thanks for letting us come by.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:18 a.m. at the Bear Canyon Senior Center.

Remarks in a Discussion on Strengthening Social Security in Albuquerque
March 22, 2005

The President. Thank you, Pete. Thanks for allowing me back in the State. It is very gracious of the people of New Mexico to not only let in a Texan—[laughter]—but to let in somebody from Arizona as well—[laughter]—and from California, I might add.

Listen, thanks, Pete. I appreciate your leadership. Pete, as you know, is a class act. He is a—he loves New Mexico, and he loves our country. We spent a lot of time talking about energy this morning. He and I are deeply concerned about the price of gasoline. We are worried about the trends taking place. We understand that we need to work with Congress to get a bill out that will encourage conservation, encourage alternative sources of energy, encourage research and development to help us use energy in wiser ways; a bill to modernize the electricity grid; a bill to encourage environmentally friendly exploration; all aimed at making America more economically secure and less dependent on foreign sources of energy. And I want to thank you for your leadership, Pete. Thanks for your leadership on the issue.

I'm proud to be here with John—John McCain. We traveled yesterday in Arizona and then Colorado and here in New Mexico. He's fixing to go back home, as am I to Texas. But the reason why I'm so pleased that John came—and you'll—we'll talk to him in a minute—is because he, like Pete, understands now is the time to get something done on the big issue of Social Security.

I'm also pleased he's here because John has been one of the true stalwarts in understanding what I call the freedom agenda. For the youngsters here, I want you to understand that you're now living in an historic time. Freedom is changing the world. We acted to secure our country, upheld doctrine—by upholding doctrine, and we

said to the Taliban, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorist." We moved to uphold the doctrine and protect America, but in so doing, we liberated millions of people from the clutches of a barbaric regime. And millions of people in Afghanistan went to the polls to vote for their leadership for the first time in 5,000 years.

I believe there will be a democracy in the Palestinian Territories, and that's essential to achieve the peace with our friend and ally Israel. I was inspired by the elections in the Ukraine. I've been very inspired by the courage of the Iraqi citizens, who in the face of terrorist threats said, "We're going to be free," and they went to the polls. These are important events because free societies will be peaceful societies. As freedom spreads, the world becomes more peaceful. And I believe we're now laying the foundations for peace to come for a generation of Americans that are growing up now, and that's an important legacy.

I want to thank those who have worn our uniform. I want to thank those who are wearing the uniform. I want to thank the family members who support those who wear the uniform. I want to thank the Members of the Congress who clearly see the vision of a peaceful world.

I appreciate the Young at Heart Choir for joining us. We should have gotten here earlier, but Pete and I went over to a retirement center, and we wanted to say hello to the folks there. My message to them was, just like my message is going to be several times today, if you're getting a Social Security check, you're going to keep getting your check. I don't care what they're telling you; I don't care what the fine print in the political ads say, you will get your check. The Government is going to keep its promise. So you may hear me